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Fourteenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since the previous report of the Secretary-General was issued, on 1 July 2010 (S/2010/352).

2. For the first time since the cessation of hostilities between the parties in August 2006, direct fighting broke out between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces on 3 August, resulting in casualties on both sides. This incident, the most serious to have taken place since the cessation of hostilities, illustrated the fragility of the security environment across the Blue Line and raised the spectre of a serious escalation between the parties.

3. While all parties continue to state their commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), repeated and continuous breaches by the parties of their obligations under the resolution were recorded over the reporting period. No progress was recorded with regard to key obligations under the resolution, including withdrawal from the northern part of Ghajar and the adjacent area, as described in further detail in the present report. There was also no movement from the current state of cessation of hostilities to a permanent ceasefire, as called for in the resolution.

4. Political tension in Lebanon increased markedly during the reporting period, fuelled by speculation and public pronouncements concerning potential indictments to be issued by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Against this background, a historic summit among the President of Lebanon, the King of Saudi Arabia and the President of the Syrian Arab Republic, held in Beirut on 31 July, succeeded in lowering tensions, which, unfortunately, have resurfaced in recent weeks. While State institutions, including the Government of National Unity, continue to function, confrontation over the Special Tribunal has led to a deterioration in the political consensus that had prevailed since the formation of the Government in 2009.

5. During the reporting period, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic continued to increase their cooperation. On 18 July, 17 agreements covering security and economic issues were signed during a visit to Damascus by a ministerial delegation from Lebanon headed by Prime Minister Saad Hariri. Some of these agreements directly affect the management of the border between the two countries. Subsequent meetings between President Bashar al-Assad and Prime Minister Hariri took place

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during the trilateral summit with Saudi Arabia in Beirut on 31 July, and later in Damascus on 29 August. It is expected that these contacts will translate into further progress on key aspects that, although pertaining to bilateral relations between the two countries, also have a direct bearing on the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and other related resolutions

6. On 1 September, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, in identical letters addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me (A/64/908-S/2010/460), conveyed information about the continued investigations by the security agencies of Lebanon into alleged Israeli spy networks in Lebanon, asserting that they constituted a blatant aggression against Lebanon and its sovereignty. The letter stated, inter alia, that "their existence is contrary to international resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), paragraph 5". The letter included a list of names of individuals alleged to have been involved, some of whom have already been tried.

A. Situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

7. The situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was relatively stable during the reporting period, in spite of several significant security incidents. In my letter to the President of the Security Council dated 11 August 2010 recommending the extension of the mandate of UNIFIL (S/2010/430 and Corr.1), I reported on the exchange of fire between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces that occurred on 3 August 2010 in the general vicinity of El Adeisse. Following this incident, the parties reconfirmed their commitment to the cessation of hostilities and the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

8. UNIFIL completed its investigation into the 3 August incident and shared the investigation report with the parties in late August. The UNIFIL investigation found that the location of the Israeli tree cutting works and the deployment of Israel Defense Forces troops were approximately 93 metres south of the Blue Line. Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL personnel were deployed along the main road in El Adeisse, which is customarily used, with no objections from the Israel Defense Forces, by the Lebanese Armed Forces, Lebanese civilians and UNIFIL, although it is located some metres south of the Blue Line. As part of its efforts to prevent an escalation of the situation, UNIFIL called on the Lebanese Armed Forces not to open fire and proposed to the Israel Defense Forces to delay work for one day and for UNIFIL to carry out the work. Both parties rejected the proposals of UNIFIL. The Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers were the first to take combat positions, aiming their weapons in the direction of Israeli troops. Immediately thereafter, the Israel Defense Forces soldiers also took up combat positions, aiming their weapons in the direction of the Lebanese troops. The investigation found that the first shot was fired into the air by a Lebanese soldier, which was followed, within seconds, by two additional shots and a burst of fire by other Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers. The

Israel Defense Forces deployed at the location subsequently opened fire in the direction of the Lebanese Armed Forces troops. The Israel Defense Forces fire at the Lebanese Armed Forces, including across the Blue Line, was subsequent to the Lebanese Armed Forces fire directed at the Israel Defense Forces. The exchange of fire lasted approximately three hours, with varying intensity and intermittent lulls. The Lebanese Armed Forces used personal weapons, medium machine guns and, at least on one occasion, a rocket-propelled grenade. The Israel Defense Forces used personal and heavy weapons, tank rounds, artillery rounds and missiles fired from attack helicopters. The investigation found that, in all probability, the Israel Defense Forces officers were hit by aimed fire originating from the general area behind the Lebanese Armed Forces deployment on the El Adeisse road. In the course of the exchange of fire, the Israel Defense Forces fired at Lebanese Armed Forces positions located some distance away from the site of the incident.

9. The UNIFIL investigation concluded that the Lebanese Armed Forces opening fire, which triggered the exchange, constituted a serious violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and a flagrant breach of the cessation of hostilities. The opening fire of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the return fire of the Israel Defense Forces endangered the safety of Lebanese civilians and UNIFIL troops. The parties have since provided their comments on the investigation report to UNIFIL, which the mission has taken into consideration in finalizing the report. The comments have not, however, altered the conclusions of the investigation carried out by UNIFIL.

10. An explosion occurred on 3 September on the first floor of a house on the outskirts of the village of Shahabiye, in Sector West, causing a fire in two rooms of the house and an adjacent garage. The preliminary findings of a UNIFIL investigation confirmed this information. The investigation has not determined the cause of the explosion, as possible evidence was tampered with or removed before the UNIFIL investigation team was allowed access to the incident site. The UNIFIL investigation, which remains ongoing, aims to ascertain whether unauthorized arms and related materiel had been present at the site of the incident and whether the house might have been used for activities that were in contravention of relevant provisions of resolution 1701 (2006). UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces did not have immediate and unimpeded access to the site in the aftermath of the incident and only in the evening, after a long standoff, which was at times confrontational between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the local people, did they enter part of the premises. At that time and place, they could not detect any evidence of arms or munitions. Throughout the night following the explosion, UNIFIL, in accordance with standard operating procedures and in support of the Lebanese Armed Forces, forming an inner ring, maintained a presence surrounding the area of the site at a distance, forming an outer ring. Nevertheless, the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces in the general area of the incident was obstructed on two occasions by persons in civilian clothes. On the basis of the available information, it is probable that items were removed from other parts of the premises during the night from 3 to 4 September.

11. The Israel Defense Forces continued their occupation of the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Notwithstanding the obligation of Israel to withdraw its forces from the area, UNIFIL has continued to engage both parties in an effort to facilitate such a withdrawal. While discussions have continued on the basis of the proposal of UNIFIL of August 2008, my Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the

UNIFIL Force Commander have begun to explore intermediate steps with the parties that could facilitate the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from this area.

12. Almost daily intrusions into Lebanese airspace by Israel Defense Forces aircraft, mostly unmanned aerial vehicles but also a significant number of fighter jets, continued. These overflights constitute violations of resolution 1701 (2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. UNIFIL protested all air violations and asked Israel to cease them immediately. The Government of Lebanon also protested the violations, demanding that they cease immediately. The Government of Israel maintained that the overflights were necessary security measures, citing, inter alia, the alleged lack of enforcement of the arms embargo as the reason for their continuation.

13. On 23 July, shots were fired from an Israel Defense Forces position across the Blue Line in the direction of the Lebanese village of Ayta ash-Sha'b (Sector West). The Israel Defense Forces later informed UNIFIL that the shots had been caused by an accidental weapon malfunction. UNIFIL protested this violation of resolution 1701 (2006) to the Israel Defense Forces.

14. On 27 June, a Lebanese shepherd was apprehended by Israel Defense Forces soldiers while accompanying his livestock in the Shaba' Farms area close to the Blue Line. The shepherd was released the following day at the Ra's Naqoura crossing point to UNIFIL, which in turn handed him over to the Lebanese authorities. The UNIFIL investigation concluded that, on the basis of all available evidence, the shepherd had crossed the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006).

15. There were other mostly inadvertent ground violations of the Blue Line, primarily by shepherds and farmers tending livestock or working in their fields, as well as civilians swimming across the Hasbani River, to the south of Ghajar. The Lebanese Armed Forces reinforced their presence in the Hasbani area and worked closely with UNIFIL to give advice to local residents and visitors on the location of the Blue Line, leading to a decrease in such violations and a reduction of tensions in the area. On a number of occasions, UNIFIL observed civilians throwing stones at the Israeli technical fence in the general area of Kafr Kila. Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL personnel worked closely to curb all such activities, which escalate tensions along the Blue Line.

16. Thus far, the parties have agreed to visibly mark the Blue Line in five sectors, for a total of 38 kilometres. The visible marking of the Blue Line requires the clearance of minefields and the disposal of unexploded ordnance in order to create safe access for measuring the coordinates and constructing Blue Line markers. In the five current sectors, 49 markers are in place out of an estimated total of 171. UNIFIL deminers have cleared access to 129 points to be marked. Following delays in recent months due to contentious points within existing marking sectors, both parties signalled their readiness to engage in the process with pragmatism and flexibility. As a result, the Force Commander chaired on 18 August a special tripartite meeting dedicated to the process of visibly marking the Blue Line. Ways in which the technical aspects of the process could be accelerated were discussed at the meeting. The parties also reaffirmed that they would respect the Blue Line as identified by the United Nations in 2000.

17. Progress on the first stage of the Lebanese Armed Forces Blue Line road project, which is supported by UNIFIL engineering assets, continues apace. Construction of 6 of the planned 11 road links has been completed and work on the seventh has commenced.

18. During the reporting period, there were cases of pointing of weapons across the Blue Line between Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces soldiers, as well as aggressive behaviour, verbal abuse and threatening gestures involving both military personnel and civilians. When possible, UNIFIL interposed itself between Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces soldiers, seeking to reduce tensions, and protested such behaviour.

19. As called for in Security Council resolutions, efforts between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces to expand their coordinated activities and enhance their cooperation were ongoing. The two Forces maintained their respective installations and continued their respective daily operational activities, comprising patrols and manning of checkpoints and observation points, and UNIFIL continued its helicopter patrols. The Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL also continued their joint operational activities, including an average of 15 counter-rocket-launching operations during each 24-hour period and three daily coordinated foot patrols along the Blue Line, and operated 16 co-located checkpoints, 6 of which are on the Litani River. At the beginning of August, the Lebanese Armed Forces increased their deployment level in the UNIFIL area of operations from three to four brigades.

20. Since my previous report, UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces conducted four joint firing capability exercises, including one live artillery firing exercise, and one casualty evacuation. In addition to training for specific skills, the exercises are aimed at strengthening liaison mechanisms and operational standards of the two Forces. Training activities between the Maritime Task Force and the Lebanese naval forces continued at sea and on land throughout the reporting period.

21. I reported on the incidents that occurred during the UNIFIL maximum strength deployment exercise on 28 and 29 June and the denial of freedom of movement of a UNIFIL patrol on 3 July in the vicinity of the village of Tulin (Sector West) in my 11 August letter to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/430 and Corr.1). The UNIFIL investigation into the 3 July incident concluded that the manner in which Lebanese civilians restricted the freedom of movement of UNIFIL seemed to point to the organized and coordinated nature of the incident. The repeated denial of freedom of movement of UNIFIL, the subsequent assault on UNIFIL personnel and vehicles and the stealing of weapons on 3 July, all of which prevented UNIFIL from discharging its duties and responsibilities in its area of operations, was in violation of resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1773 (2007). The Security Council issued a statement deploring the incident of 3 July and the UNIFIL Force Commander held meetings with the Lebanese political and military leadership, as well as with local municipal leaders and authorities; in addition, he addressed an open letter to the communities in the UNIFIL area of operations. The Government of Lebanon issued a public statement supporting UNIFIL and the Force Commander received assurances that UNIFIL would continue to enjoy unimpeded freedom of movement in its area of operations.

22. In addition to the obstruction of the freedom of movement of UNIFIL on 28 and 29 June, 3 July and 3 September mentioned above, stone throwing by civilians on 14 September in the vicinity of Jibal al-Butm caused minor damage to several UNIFIL patrol vehicles. Except with regard to these incidents, UNIFIL generally exercised freedom of movement throughout its area of operations, carrying out approximately 10,000 patrols each month, and the attitude of the local communities towards UNIFIL remained predominately positive.

23. The Civil Affairs Office and the Civil-Military Coordination Unit maintained close contact with local communities, seeking to resolve any issues that could give rise to problems and to mitigate the effects of the significant operational activities of the Force on the daily lives of local residents. The provision of humanitarian, infrastructure, capacity-building and vocational-training support through the activities of troop-contributing countries and projects funded from the UNIFIL budget continued to further boost relations between UNIFIL and the local population.

24. UNIFIL continued to provide assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces in taking steps towards the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani River of an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006). This remains a long-term objective.

25. The Government of Israel maintains that Hizbullah is continuing to build up its military presence and capacity, including within the UNIFIL area of operations. It claims that the incident in Shahabiye on 3 September was caused by the explosion of a Hizbullah weapons depot, confirming its allegations that Hizbullah is storing and maintaining weapons in villages south of the Litani River in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006). Israel also charges that Hizbullah maintains military positions and units inside populated areas in southern Lebanon. It also alleges that unauthorized weapons are being transferred into Lebanon, including into the UNIFIL area of operations.

26. In cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL immediately investigates any claim regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel or weapons in its area of operations if specific information is received. UNIFIL remains determined to act with all means available within its mandate and to the full extent provided for in its rules of engagement. However, under its mandate, UNIFIL cannot search private houses and properties unless there is credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity emanating from that specific location. To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor found, evidence of the unauthorized transfer of arms into its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces Command reconfirmed that it will act immediately on receiving evidence of unauthorized armed personnel or weapons in the area and put a stop to any illegal activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions, specifically those concerning the illegal presence of armed personnel and weapons south of the Litani River. Furthermore, UNIFIL has routinely checked previously discovered former facilities of armed elements in the area of operations, including bunkers and caves, but has found no indication that they had been reactivated and no evidence of new military infrastructure in its area of operations.

27. While there were no incidents of this nature during the reporting period, rocket attacks carried out from the UNIFIL area of operations, attacks with explosive devices against UNIFIL and discoveries of weapons, ammunitions and related materiel have demonstrated the presence of weapons and hostile armed elements ready to use them in the area south of the Litani River. The Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL continued to take coordinated measures aimed specifically at ensuring that there were no armed elements in the area and preventing the possible unauthorized transfer of weapons into the area south of the Litani River.

28. UNIFIL encountered no unauthorized armed personnel in the area of operations during the reporting period other than individuals armed with hunting rifles, who were engaged in hunting activities. The Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL continued to take action to curb all hunting activities and the Lebanese Armed Forces detained a number of individuals and confiscated their weapons. In addition, armed persons and weapons were present inside Palestinian refugee camps in the area of operations.

29. The Maritime Task Force continued to carry out its dual mandate of conducting maritime interdiction operations in the area of maritime operations and training the Lebanese naval forces. The Lebanese navy continued to contribute successfully to the maritime operations by hailing vessels approaching Lebanese ports and by compiling a recognized local maritime surface picture over the territorial waters with the assistance of the Coastal Radar Organization. Since its inception in October 2006, the Maritime Task Force has hailed and queried 33,603 vessels. Between the date of my previous report and 15 October, an additional 96 inspections were carried out on vessels identified as suspicious. Lebanese navy and customs officials inspected the vessels to verify that there were no unauthorized arms or related materiel on board and cleared all of them. During combined maritime interdiction operation exercises, Lebanese navy personnel continued to demonstrate their increasing ability to conduct such operations and to control Lebanese territorial waters through the use of the coastal radars. However, as reported previously, Lebanese navy maritime operations remain restricted owing to the lack of an adequate number of vessels, including vessels that can operate in bad weather conditions.

30. Incidents along the line of buoys continued to occur several times a week, with Israel Defense Forces navy units dropping depth charges and firing flares and warning shots along the buoy line. The Israel Defense Forces stated that these were security measures employed as a matter of procedure when Lebanese fishing vessels approached the line of buoys. UNIFIL, however, has no mandate to monitor the line of buoys, which the Government of Israel installed unilaterally and which the Government of Lebanon does not recognize. Both parties raised in the tripartite forum the need for a security mechanism to prevent incidents from occurring in the area of the buoy line. UNIFIL stands ready to assist if the parties agree on how to proceed.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

31. Tripartite meetings remained a critical forum for regular liaison and coordination between UNIFIL and the parties and the principal mechanism for addressing security and military operational issues related to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). During regular tripartite meetings, which were attended by senior representatives of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces and chaired by the UNIFIL Force Commander, security and military operational issues related to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) were addressed and UNIFIL investigations into incidents and violations of the resolution were discussed. In addition to the regular meetings, the forum held one extraordinary meeting on 4 August following the 3 August exchange of fire incident. At the extraordinary meeting, the parties discussed initiatives to ensure that the incident remained an isolated one and reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

32. On 21 September, the Lebanese Council of Ministers endorsed the proposed strategic dialogue mechanism between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces with its approval of the proposal put forward by the Ministry of Defence for the establishment of a permanent coordination committee with UNIFIL. The permanent coordination committee was granted the authority to seek assistance as necessary from officials in ministries, public administration and institutes. Prior to this decision, UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces held preliminary meetings at the operational level focusing on how to further reinforce cooperation between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL deployments south of the Litani River. In line with the recommendation of the technical review carried out jointly by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNIFIL, the new, formalized strategic dialogue mechanism is aimed at carrying out analyses of ground forces and maritime assets and setting a series of benchmarks reflecting the correlation between the capacities and responsibilities of UNIFIL vis-à-vis those of the Lebanese Armed Forces, with a view to identifying Lebanese Armed Forces requirements for the accomplishment of tasks mandated in resolution 1701 (2006). UNIFIL will seek to engage the permanent coordination committee, as well as the Lebanese Armed Forces operational committee, at the earliest opportunity, with a view to taking forward the strategic dialogue at both levels.

33. In addition, UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces maintained their regular interaction at the operational and tactical levels. This included daily liaison at relevant levels, including through the placement of Lebanese Armed Forces liaison officers at UNIFIL Force Headquarters and at the sector level, and a UNIFIL liaison officer at Lebanese Armed Forces headquarters for the South Litani Sector in Tyre.

34. UNIFIL and the Israel Defense Forces also maintained regular and efficient liaison and coordination. The UNIFIL Force Commander maintained effective relations with his Israel Defense Forces counterparts and other senior Israeli authorities. UNIFIL continued to place liaison officers at the Israel Defense Forces Northern Command headquarters. No progress has been made in establishing a UNIFIL office in Tel Aviv.

C. Disarming armed groups

35. Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) calls for the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006) which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State. However, Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias continue to operate in Lebanon outside the control of the State, in violation of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). Hizbullah, which remains the most significant armed group in Lebanon, continues to maintain substantial military capabilities outside the control of the State and I continue to receive reports asserting that it has substantially upgraded and expanded its military arsenal. Hizbullah leaders do not deny these allegations, having repeatedly claimed in public that their organization possesses significant military means, which they claim will only be used for defensive purposes. This remains a central issue of contention in the political debate in Lebanon.

36. On 24 August, heavy armed clashes erupted between supporters of Hizbullah and the Association of Islamic Charitable Projects (Al-Ahbash), a Sunni group that

is a political ally of the opposition, in the Beirut neighbourhood of Burj Abi-Haider. The clashes, which resulted in the deaths of three people, including a senior Hizbullah official, rapidly spilled over to adjacent neighbourhoods in Beirut and continued for several hours. The use of machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades in the fighting provided a stark reminder of the widespread proliferation of weapons in Lebanon and the risk this poses to the maintenance of domestic stability.

37. The presence of Palestinian armed groups outside the camps continues to challenge the ability of Lebanon to exercise full sovereignty over its territory. This was further illustrated by the statement made on 31 August by Ahmad Jibril, the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), to the effect that his organization would not hand over its weapons to the Lebanese authorities. I have called upon the Government of Lebanon to dismantle the PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases, and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with these efforts. Regrettably, there has been no progress during the reporting period towards the disarming of such groups, as called for by Lebanese leaders at the Committee of National Dialogue session of 2006 and reaffirmed in subsequent sessions of the national dialogue since 2008 and the Ministerial Statement of November 2009.

38. On 13 August, Abd al-Rahman Awad, the alleged leader of Fateh al-Islam in Lebanon, and his deputy reportedly died in a confrontation with the Lebanese Armed Forces in the Bekaa Valley while attempting to flee Lebanon. Awad had been sentenced in absentia in relation to a number of bomb attacks and killings over the past three years. According to Lebanese security officials, he recently had been in hiding in Ain al-Hilweh camp, near Saida.

39. The security situation inside the Palestinian refugee camps has been generally calm during the reporting period, with only a few incidents reported, thanks to increased cooperation on security issues between Palestinian factions and Lebanese security agencies. On 7 September, tensions rose in Ain al-Hilweh camp when a group believed to have sympathies for Al-Qaida publicly threatened to assassinate a local Fatah leader responsible for security cooperation with Lebanese authorities.

40. Addressing the dismal living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon would have a positive impact on the security situation within the camps and would reduce potential security threats to Lebanon as a whole. This much needed improvement in the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon would, of course, be without prejudice to a resolution of the Palestinian refugee question in the context of a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace agreement. On 17 August, the Parliament of Lebanon adopted significant amendments to the Labour Code and the Social Security Law which should improve access to the private sector labour market by Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The United Nations welcomed these decisions as a step in the right direction and looks forward to their effective implementation.

41. It is important that the disarmament of armed groups in Lebanon be achieved through a Lebanese-led political process. In this connection, on 19 August President Sleiman chaired a new session of the Committee of National Dialogue, during which participants heard and debated a presentation on a future national defence strategy and agreed to continue studying the strategy on the basis of the proposals presented so far and those expected to be presented by participants. Participants further reaffirmed the importance of national consensus and the consolidation of

political and security stability in the country. They committed themselves to the decisions that had been approved by previous sessions of the Committee of National Dialogue, in particular those related to the disarmament of Palestinian groups outside the camps. They agreed to reconvene on 4 November 2010.

42. A total of seven proposals on a national defence strategy have been presented by participants in the national dialogue since it reconvened in 2008. Four of these proposals were made public by their authors. The representatives of Hizbullah and the Future Movement have not yet presented their proposals. The proposals currently in the public domain reflect areas of convergence, but also reveal considerably different perceptions of the threats faced by Lebanon and strategic options to counter these. A committee of experts, composed of representatives of the participants in the Committee of National Dialogue, was established in 2009 and mandated to find common ground among the proposals presented by participants. To date, not all participants have nominated their representatives to this committee of experts. I encourage the committee to meet regularly and make progress in its work.

43. The national dialogue has proved to be an important mechanism for consensus-building among Lebanese leaders and for the maintenance of domestic stability. In spite of the differences that still stand in the way of an agreement on a national defence strategy in the short term, participants in the national dialogue have agreed on the importance of ensuring the full implementation of the Taif Accords and have proposed a number of reform initiatives that they regard as essential for further progress on the national defence strategy. I encourage participants to remain focused on the development of such a strategy that will address the relationship between the armed groups and the State, with a view to completing the disarmament of armed militias, as called for by resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006).

D. Arms embargo

44. In resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council decided that all States shall take measures to prevent the sale or supply of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon by their nationals or from their territories using their flag vessels or aircraft. The Council also called upon the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points so as to prevent the entry of arms and related materiel without its consent.

45. During the reporting period, the Government of Lebanon did not report any breach of the arms embargo imposed by resolution 1701 (2006). For its part, the Government of Israel continues to allege that Hizbullah continues to rebuild its armament. According to the Government of Israel, Hizbullah remains in possession of more than 55,000 missiles and rockets, even as the organization seeks to acquire even more advanced weapons. During a recent visit by my Special Coordinator for Lebanon to Israel, the Government of Israel conveyed to him allegations of breaches of the arms embargo across the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Although the United Nations takes these allegations seriously, it is not in a position to verify this information independently.

46. The Government of Lebanon has continued to make progress in developing a national strategy for the management of its land borders. The National Coordinator appointed in March to oversee the development of such a strategy submitted a draft to the Prime Minister in August. The Prime Minister is in the process of reviewing

this draft before presenting it to the Cabinet for approval. The draft strategy will address the upgrading and modernization of legal crossing points between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, including the opening of a new legal crossing point, which would bring the total number to six, reflecting agreements signed between the two Governments in July. It will also address the issues of control of the land border by dedicated units of the Lebanese Armed Forces and socio-economic development of border areas. With regard to control of the land border, the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces informed my Special Coordinator that the army is ready to take on these new tasks through the deployment of three border regiments composed of dedicated units, but noted that this will require additional equipment and infrastructure development. In this connection, my Special Coordinator is in close contact with ambassadors from donor countries, which remain committed to supporting the implementation of the border strategy once it is adopted.

47. On the ground, the Common Border Force, comprising around 700 staff from the four security agencies in Lebanon (Armed Forces, Internal Security, General Security and Customs), continues its operations along the northern border with the Syrian Arab Republic. On the eastern border the Lebanese army continues to deploy around 600 troops and the Internal Security Forces around 200 personnel, along a stretch of 80 kilometres immediately adjacent to the area of operations of the existing Common Border Force, up to Arsal. The Lebanese Armed Forces are currently planning the deployment of a third border regiment that would operate between Arsal and Masn'a.

48. In identical letters dated 13 October from the Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Government of Israel asserts that the relevant parties have not taken meaningful action to combat illegal weapons transfer in spite of the efforts by the Secretary-General and donor countries to tackle this issue in an operative manner.

49. The Lebanese authorities deem cooperation with their Syrian counterparts with regard to the management of the border, in particular as it relates to security issues, as satisfactory. At the same time, the effective management of the border continues to be adversely affected by the fact that it is neither delineated nor demarcated, and by the continued presence of Palestinian military bases that straddle the border between the two countries.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

50. The Lebanese Mine Action Centre continues to coordinate humanitarian clearance operations in southern Lebanon through the Regional Mine Action Centre in Nabatiye. The United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre continues to liaise between UNIFIL and the Regional Centre in respect of operations, accreditation and quality assurance. During the reporting period, three additional cluster bomb strike locations were identified and recorded for a total to date of 1,124.

51. Since the end of the conflict in August 2006, the number of incidents among civilians has reached 286, consisting of 30 fatalities and 256 injuries, while accidents among demining personnel resulting from clearance activities remain at 60, with 14 fatalities and 46 injuries.

F. Delineation of borders

52. The Security Council, as recalled in paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006), in paragraph 4 of resolution 1680 (2006) strongly encouraged the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to respond positively to the request by the Government of Lebanon to delineate their common border. Following the meetings between the President of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Prime Minister of Lebanon in Damascus on 18 and 19 July, there appears to be a renewed consensus on the need to proceed with this delineation. This consensus reaffirms the commitments that were reflected in the outcome of the summit meetings between President Assad and President Sleiman in August 2008 and in June 2010.

53. No progress was recorded on the issue of the Shab'a Farms area during the reporting period. In spite of my repeated requests, I have not received any response from Israel, which continues to occupy the area, or from the Syrian Arab Republic to the provisional definition of the area contained in my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) issued on 30 October 2007 (S/2007/641). Syrian officials have continued to affirm their recognition that the Shab'a Farms area is Lebanese, but insist that Israel must withdraw from the Shab'a Farms before the border can be delineated in that area.

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

54. The safety and security of UNIFIL staff remains a priority. Notwithstanding the obligation of all parties to ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL and the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon for maintaining law and order, UNIFIL continued to apply risk-mitigating measures for its personnel, assets and installations while ensuring mandate implementation. UNIFIL continued to receive security threats during the reporting period. UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued their cooperation and joint efforts to ensure that security threats to UNIFIL are addressed appropriately.

55. UNIFIL continued to monitor four cases in the Lebanese military court against individuals accused of forming armed groups to carry out attacks against UNIFIL. On 10 August, two individuals were convicted and sentenced to one and three years of imprisonment, respectively, for their involvement in the attack against a UNIFIL vehicle north of Saida on 8 January 2008. Another 22 defendants are currently being tried in the three remaining cases. As mentioned in paragraph 38 above, the alleged leader of Fateh al-Islam in Lebanon reportedly was killed on 13 August. Awad was suspected of being involved in the majority of the attacks planned and executed against UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

56. As at 15 October 2010, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 11,877, of whom 465 were women. The mission has 328 international and 651 national civilian staff members, of whom 92 and 165, respectively, are women. UNIFIL is also supported by 54 United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers of the Observer Group Lebanon, none of whom are women. A Sri Lankan Force

Protection Company, Cambodian Engineering Company and a Tanzanian Military Police Company are scheduled to arrive in November. The implementation of the recommendations of the joint technical review, including the recommended adjustments to the force structure, assets and requirements, is ongoing.

57. Despite Italy having extended its leadership of the Maritime Task Force until 31 August, it has not been possible to identify a successor. Until a lead nation comes forward, the Maritime Task Force is temporarily carrying out its mandate under an onshore command with operational control being held by the Force Commander. This is a short-term contingency measure. The future leadership of the Maritime Task Force, be it with a flagship at sea or under the temporary onshore arrangement, remains of concern. As I stated in my letter to the Security Council referred to above (S/2010/430 and Corr.1), in order for the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force to continue to carry out its dual-mandated role — to help the Lebanese navy prevent the unauthorized entry of arms or related material by sea into Lebanon by carrying out maritime interdiction operations and to provide training for the country's naval personnel — the necessary maritime assets and leadership must be forthcoming. The current strength of the Maritime Task Force is seven vessels, composed of two frigates, one corvette, three patrol boats and one supply vessel, complemented by one helicopter.

V. Observations

58. Overall, the events during this reporting period suggest a deterioration in the situation in Lebanon. I have expressed my deep concern at the exchange of fire between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces that occurred on 3 August, in which lives were lost on both sides. I urge the parties to do everything in their power to ensure that this incident remains an isolated one, and to cooperate closely with UNIFIL in its efforts to prevent such an event from recurring. I am encouraged that the parties have reconfirmed their commitment to resolution 1701 (2006) and call on them to fully respect the cessation of hostilities and the Blue Line in its entirety.

59. I wish to recall that the identification of the Blue Line in 2000 was solely the responsibility of the United Nations for the practical purpose of confirming the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from Lebanon in compliance with resolution 425 (1978), without prejudice to future border agreements. Both sides, despite their respective reservations in 2000, undertook to respect the Blue Line as identified by the United Nations. I again urge both parties to do their utmost to prevent violations of the Blue Line, to act with maximum restraint and to refrain from taking any measures close to the Blue Line that could lead to misunderstandings or be perceived by the other side as provocative. The Blue Line must be respected in its entirety.

60. Notwithstanding the new strategic environment and the relative stability prevailing in southern Lebanon that UNIFIL has helped to establish, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, the situation continues to be volatile and more work remains to be done by the parties to advance the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Long-term sustained efforts are required to ensure that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River is free of any armed personnel,

assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006).

61. I deem it a priority to resolve the issue of the continued occupation by the Israel Defense Forces of the northern part of Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line. I urge Israel to withdraw its forces in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006), without further delay. UNIFIL stands ready to facilitate such a withdrawal. I look forward to a successful outcome of the ongoing discussions referred to in paragraph 11 above, which could help to revive momentum for broader implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

62. I am concerned about the fact that the Israel Defense Forces continue to violate resolution 1701 (2006) and Lebanese sovereignty on an almost daily basis through overflights of Lebanese territory. These overflights exacerbate tensions in southern Lebanon. They also have a negative impact on the credibility of the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL. I call once again on Israel to respect Lebanon's sovereignty by ceasing immediately all overflights of Lebanese territory.

63. As UNIFIL's strategic partner, the Lebanese Armed Forces play a key role in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). I welcome the deployment in late July 2010 of an additional brigade of the Lebanese Armed Forces in southern Lebanon. I also welcome the endorsement by the Government of Lebanon of the implementation of the strategic dialogue mechanism between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces. I encourage UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces to launch this new strategic dialogue mechanism at the earliest opportunity.

64. The Lebanese Armed Forces have continued to act with strong commitment and resolve, and their capacity has been gradually strengthened with the assistance of international donors. I am grateful to those countries that are helping to equip and train the Lebanese Armed Forces, including the navy, and I urge the international community to continue this critically required support to Lebanese Armed Forces capacity-building. Such support is essential if the Lebanese Armed Forces are to be able to assume effective responsibility for security over the UNIFIL area of operations and the maritime entry points into Lebanon in the future.

65. I am concerned about the incidents in the reporting period that impeded the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and endangered UNIFIL peacekeepers. The freedom of movement of UNIFIL and the security and safety of its personnel are integral to the effective execution of its tasks, in accordance with resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1773 (2007). The primary responsibility for ensuring freedom of movement to UNIFIL personnel in the area of operations lies with the Lebanese authorities.

66. I am grateful to all troop-contributing countries for their continued commitment to UNIFIL and to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). I also wish to commend the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander and all the military and civilian personnel of UNIFIL who continue to play a critical role in helping to promote peace and stability in southern Lebanon, as well as the Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the staff of his Office.

67. The maintenance of domestic stability in Lebanon is required for the Government of National Unity to carry out the measures outlined in its Ministerial Statement that aim at strengthening the authority of the Lebanese State, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006) and other relevant Security Council

resolutions. In this connection, I am concerned by the marked rise of political tension in Lebanon and by the recent challenges to the authority of State institutions by representatives of Hizbullah and some of its allies. I appreciate the efforts of Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic to support the Government of Lebanon in preserving domestic stability, and hope that such constructive efforts will continue. I call upon Lebanese leaders to continue to work towards preventing a political crisis that some in Lebanon fear could erupt into violence.

68. I remain deeply concerned by the widespread proliferation of weapons in Lebanon. This has been confirmed by Government authorities and corroborated by the speed with which the armed confrontation of 24 August in Beirut between supporters of Hizbullah and Al-Ahbash spread within the city. I call upon Lebanese leaders to take all possible measures to prevent the use of weapons by their supporters, which directly contravenes Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006).

69. The presence of armed groups in Lebanon operating outside the control of the State poses a challenge to the ability of the State to exercise its full sovereignty and control over its territory, and violates resolution 1701 (2006). I continue to believe that the disarmament of armed groups should be carried out through a Lebanese-led political process that would result in bringing all arms under the control of the State. In this connection, I welcome the fact that the Committee of National Dialogue has continued to meet. I recognize that this mechanism provides a necessary platform to promote national unity and to generate consensus on key issues of national concern. Yet, I encourage participants to make further progress towards the establishment of a national defence strategy that would address armed groups operating outside the control of the State. I believe it is essential that Lebanese leaders, acting under the direction of their President, sustain their efforts in this respect. The adoption of benchmarks against which progress could be assessed would lend further credibility to their efforts.

70. I call upon the Government of Lebanon to implement past decisions taken by the Committee of National Dialogue, as reiterated by participants at its most recent session, held on 19 August, with respect to the elimination of Palestinian military bases outside the camps. Lebanese authorities recognize that since most of these bases straddle the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic and can be accessed from Syrian territory, cooperation between the two countries is essential to achieving this goal.

71. I encourage Lebanon to further its efforts to control its borders and call upon all Member States to prevent transfers of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon without the consent of the Lebanese State. Progress made so far in the development of a comprehensive border strategy for Lebanon is a positive sign, as is the continued operation of the Common Border Force along the northern border with the Syrian Arab Republic. I look forward to the adoption of the comprehensive border strategy in the near future. I am grateful to Member States that are providing assistance for the improvement of Lebanon's border management capacity and call upon the international community to support implementation of Lebanon's comprehensive border strategy once it is adopted.

72. While the delineation and demarcation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic is a bilateral issue, such delineation is necessary to enable Lebanon to be in a position to extend its control and to exercise its full sovereignty

over all of its territory, as called for by the Security Council in resolution 1701 (2006). I call upon Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic to make further progress on this issue and welcome their renewed intentions to delineate their common border, as called for by the Council in resolution 1680 (2006) and reiterated in resolution 1701 (2006).

73. I look forward to concrete steps in this respect by both Governments in the coming months. I also intend to continue my diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the issue of the Shab'a Farms area. I once again call upon Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic to submit their responses to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area that I had provided on the basis of the best available information.

74. The situation of Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon remains a subject of serious concern. Respect for the basic human rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon requires decisive action to improve their living standards. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continues to face significant funding shortfalls both for its regular programmes, aimed at delivering basic services to the Palestinian refugees, and for the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Bared camp. I call upon the Government of Lebanon and the donor community to continue their efforts to address the dire socio-economic situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon as a matter of priority. I further urge donors, including countries in the region, to continue, and if possible increase, their support for UNRWA.

75. I remain keenly aware that the implementation by Israel and Lebanon of their obligations under resolution 1701 (2006) is greatly influenced by dynamics affecting the region as a whole. Tangible progress in the Middle East peace process would contribute to a positive momentum as concerns the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and the stability of Lebanon.

76. I call on both Israel and Lebanon to take the steps necessary to reach a permanent ceasefire and to achieve what the Security Council in its resolution 1701 (2006) terms a long-term solution governing their relations. The achievement of that solution cannot and should not be dissociated from the need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on all relevant resolutions of the Council, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1515 (2003). I call upon the parties and upon all Member States to work decisively towards that goal.